

# DIGITAL TRAINEESHIPS GUIDELINES

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*elsa*

The European Law Students' Association

### Foreword

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019/2020 term, the International Board of ELSA decided to introduce the possibility of carrying out ELSA Traineeships remotely. This decision was made in order to ensure the future of our programme in a socially responsible manner, taking into account the introduction of various travel restrictions worldwide and to further ensure the safety of our members whilst nonetheless continuing to allow them the opportunity to strengthen their legal knowledge and experience.

The guidelines were created to serve the purpose of better informing the network on the practicalities related to the carrying out of Digital ELSA Traineeships, as well as, better understanding the renewed selling points of these Traineeships in regard to our partners and members.

The purpose of them remains especially to allow you to better understand how to negotiate remote ELSA Traineeships maintaining all the important requirements of the programme such as to continue to serve the purpose of cultural exchange and work experience while being open to more accessible possibilities.

I wish you a pleasant and informative read.

Cordially yours,

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### ONLINE ELSA TRAINEESHIPS

#### Concept

Online ELSA Traineeships are **remote internships** that are performed digitally. Remote internships can be completed by the Trainees from the comfort of their home. Thus, they do not defy any prevailing international travel restrictions and social distancing measures in place.

Furthermore, remote internships offer a unique opportunity in the realm of equal opportunities. Specifically, as remote internships require no travel or accommodation, these allow all applicants, especially those from difficult socio-economic backgrounds to partake in the ELSA programme without financial boundaries or restrictions, thus rendering our programme more diverse and inclusive.

Online ELSA Traineeships may be offered by a Traineeship Provider either:

- a) **As the only offer**, i.e. the Traineeship Provider is not offering any normal/on-site ELSA Traineeships;  
*or*
- b) **In addition to the normal/on-site ELSA Traineeships** of the Traineeship Provider either as:
  - a. Separate vacancies, i.e. the Traineeship Provider submits separate Traineeship Specification Forms (TSF) for the Online and normal/on-site ELSA Traineeships, respectively;  
*or*
  - b. **Flexible option**, i.e. the way that the Traineeship is performed is up to negotiation with the Trainee at a later date.

The above consideration should be detailed as well as possible in the TSF (cf. pag. 7 'How to fill in the TSF for Online ELSA Traineeships' below). This is to avoid unnecessary confusion on the part of applicants.

### BENEFITS OF ONLINE ELSA TRAINEESHIPS

1. Many organisations (including famous Law Firms) have already implemented their **remote internship programmes**.
2. ELSA since March 2020, has **various Traineeship Providers that offer remote work possibilities** to their respective ELSA Trainees and the feedback reviewed is more than positive for both parties.
3. ELSA International reports that **international Traineeship Providers are interested** in providing remote vacancies in addition to their “normal” on-site ELSA Traineeships.
4. Online ELSA Traineeships offer an efficient **solution** in the form of an opportunity to provide a professional experience even if access to “normal” on-site ELSA Traineeships is limited.
5. Online ELSA Traineeships are **aligned with the spirit of ELSA** (cf. 2.3 ‘ELSA Traineeships brand’ below).

### ELSA Traineeships Brand

Online ELSA Traineeships are in line with the spirit of ELSA Traineeships.

1. **The purpose of ELSA Traineeships** is to ‘*[provide] opportunities for law students and young lawyers to gain work experience in a foreign legal system while learning about other cultures.*’
2. **The aims of ELSA** are ‘*to promote, establish and develop mutual understanding, co-operation and personal contacts among law students and young lawyers from different States and legal systems, thereby equipping them for professional life in an international environment*’, read in conjunction with the **means of ELSA**.
3. Online ELSA Traineeships provide the Trainees with learning opportunities about **foreign legal systems** (multijurisdictional work) and **work cultures** (multicultural team dynamics).
4. Online ELSA Traineeships equip the Trainees with the **hard and soft skills necessary** to succeed in professional life in an international environment.
5. Online ELSA Traineeships foster **direct contacts and mutual understanding** across jurisdictional/cultural boundaries and build the Trainees’ **professional network**.
6. Due to the absence of barriers to participation associated with normal/on-site ELSA Traineeships<sup>1</sup>, Online ELSA Traineeships may be **more accessible** irrespective of the applicants’ socio-economic background and circumstances.
7. There are many possibilities for how to also provide **remote reception** in respect of the Online ELSA Traineeships<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. the high costs (*inter alia* travel, accommodation, documentation) and time-consuming procedures (*inter alia* documentation).

<sup>2</sup> Generally, the Reception strategy is determined by the respective Hosting Group. This fact applies with regards to both on-site and Online ELSA Traineeships. Some of the ideas that so far have been presented about how to engage the respective Hosting Groups in **remote reception** include *inter alia* a mentor/buddy system, sending postcards to the Trainee and hosting virtual after-work hangouts.

### QUALITY STANDARDS

To ensure that Online ELSA Traineeships are of the desirable quality, the respective Traineeship Providers shall sign an [annex to the TSF Contract](#). This document explains the specific additional requirements applicable to the proper execution of Online ELSA Traineeships.

#### Job Hunting

Below you may find further information and guidance regarding the Job Hunting practicalities, as well as, tips & tricks regarding Digital Traineeships.

#### Promoting Online ELSA Traineeships to Traineeship Providers

National Groups that wish to propose Online ELSA Traineeships to their Traineeship Providers are encouraged to do so. The benefits include demonstrating the future-oriented approach of ELSA as the global representative of the future generation of legal professionals. Moreover, offering the possibility of Online ELSA Traineeships to Traineeship Providers shows that ELSA has adapted to the new demands of the work market.

1. During the negotiations with current or potential traineeship providers, approach the possibility of a negotiable ELSA Traineeships where possible. Specifically, be transparent with the potential partner in concluding an ELSA Traineeships agreement that includes the possibility of remote work if the standard “on-site” traineeship were to not be available either for the partner or the trainee.
2. Emphasise that the remote vacancies are an alternative solution introduced in order for the Traineeship Provider in question to still benefit from the best international legal talent that ELSA can provide.
3. Explain the applicable **Terms and Conditions**, including the **annex**.
4. Explain how to fill in the **TSF** with all the necessary information (cf. below).
5. Ask **whether the Traineeship Provider implements already remote work** and, if so, how are they finding it so far.
6. Provide **examples** of other organisations offering remote vacancies and how they do so.
7. Remind that the deadline to submit the TSF in accordance with the ELSA Traineeships Calendar.

#### Examples of how remote internships may be structured & initial email contact

1. The intern is assigned to a specific project or a more general supportive function within the team. The intern is also assigned a supervisor/mentor to whom they regularly report from the team;
2. The intern and the supervisor/team have regular meetings online (e.g. a weekly conference call). During these meetings, the work tasks and expectations are laid out and feedback about the previously completed tasks can be given to the intern.
3. The supervisor/team provides the intern with tasks and agrees on a production timeline. The intern will report on the completion of these tasks to the supervisor.

Below is a sample email for **reference**:

<i>Title</i>	E.g. “Interns from the European Law Students’ Association”
<i>Introduction</i>	<p>Dear Mr./Ms. _____,</p> <p>My name is _____ and I am the Vice President in charge of the legal recruitment and traineeship programme of the European Law Students’ Association in _____.</p> <p>I am contacting [name of the organisation] since you actively work with [the area of activity, e.g. human rights advocacy and medium-length projects in different jurisdictions]. I am confident that your organisation would substantially benefit from a greater exposure to ELSA members.</p> <p>ELSA is the world’s largest independent association for law students and young lawyers. We are present in 44 countries and reach over 55,000 members at more than 300 universities in Europe. Although non-political, ELSA stands for human rights and cultural diversity, and campaigns internationally for causes such as the rule of law.</p>
<i>Body</i>	<p>One of the most popular initiatives of ELSA is the ELSA Traineeships whereby we provide organisations like yours for free with a streamlined recruitment method for the best talent in accordance with your needs and preferences. You will view only the applications of the candidates fulfilling your requirements which you specify simply by filling the Traineeship Specification Form.</p> <p>There are two intakes for organisations per year, the next deadline approaching in [amount of time] on [the JH deadline]. [You can explain the time-line more in detail here.]</p> <p>Thanks to its adaptive nature, ELSA has recently introduced the possibility of remote internships in conjunction with standards on-site traineeships where possible, in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This due to our wish to ensure the safety of our members, whilst allowing them to continue to benefit from such experiences as well as allowing organisations such as yours to continue to benefit from the best international legal talent that ELSA can provide.</p> <p><i>As for the examples of remote internships, many of ELSA’s partner organisations offer such vacancies in their research department. Thus, they employ trainees from different jurisdictions for projects involving comparative and international law. These digital internships generally resemble a lot how remote work is generally done.</i></p>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<p>How does this all sound to you? For further information, please do not hesitate to contact me – I am happy to discuss matters further with you. Attached to this email you can find more information about ELSA Traineeships and its benefits. I look forward to hearing from you soon and wish you a great rest of the day!</p>

### Remuneration for Digital ELSA Traineeships

The aspect of remuneration for remote work is one that depends on national legislation. When negotiating this with the potential ELSA Traineeships Provider, ELSA Traineeships officers should:

- Keep in mind that many organisations will be hesitant to provide ELSA Traineeships Trainees working remotely with the same remuneration as on-site trainees.
- Research national legislation regarding payment and remuneration for remote workers;
- Work towards negotiating for a fair remuneration package for the remote Trainee based on the workload that is being requested by the potential TNP;
- Discuss the possibility of otherwise offering **fringe benefits** relevant to remote work, such as *inter alia* food, phone bills, and/or internet expenses;



### HOW TO FILL IN THE TSF FOR ONLINE ELSA TRAINEESHIPS

In addition to the generally required information, the following details need to be described (generally) in the **additional information section** of the TSF:

1. The method of **supervision** (e.g. an assigned mentor, weekly calls with the team, daily reporting via email);
2. The **tasks** of the Trainee (e.g. a specific project, different tasks as assigned by the team);
3. The work schedule:
  - a. **Full-time** (include the estimated workload (e.g. 40 hours per week);
  - b. **Part-time** (include the estimated workload (e.g. 15 hours per week, only certain weekdays);
  - c. **Other** (e.g. project-specific, negotiable with the Trainee directly, flexible);
4. Whether the Traineeship Provider wants to offer:
  - a. **Normal/on-site ELSA Traineeships** also;
  - b. **Only remote vacancies**;
  - c. **Both Available**, i.e. the way that the Traineeship is performed is up to negotiation with the Trainee at a later date. (***This is the preferred option***)